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# COMMUNITY DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: WINDWARD ISLANDS

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## INTRODUCTION

- Economic disaster losses increasing globally (UN/ISDR, 2011).
- The Caribbean, 2nd most hazard-prone region in the world – hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions and others (Collymore, 2011).
- Regional and national institutions have been implementing measures to build capacity in the Caribbean.
- There are significant improvements however, this enhanced capacity has not effectively reduced disaster risks in some communities in the Windward Islands.

## AIM OF RESEARCH

To assess the vulnerability and capacity of communities to reduce risks to hazards in the Windward Islands (Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

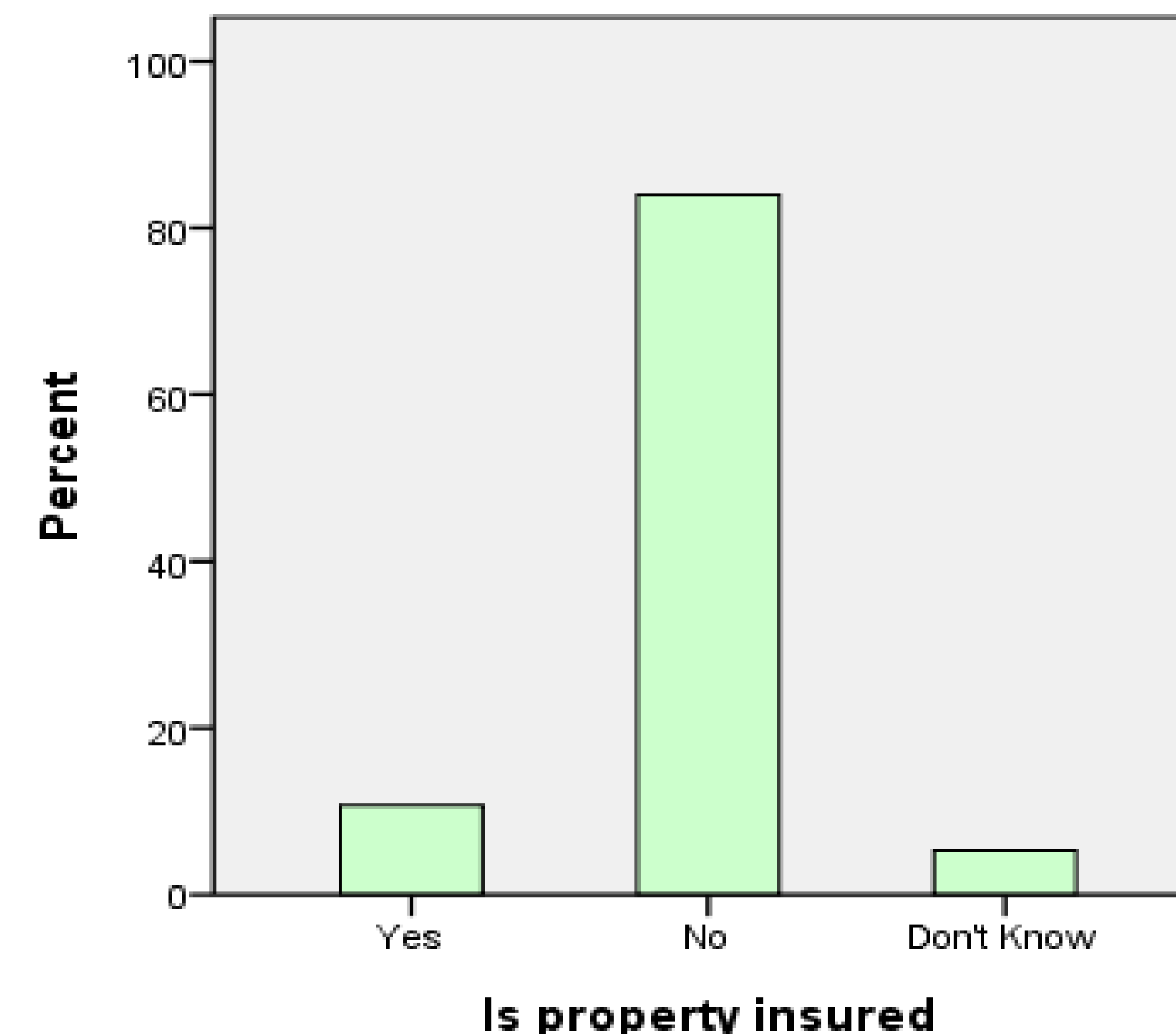


## RESULTS : HAZARD, VULNERABILITY , CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE

### High level of vulnerability and exposure to hazards

- Communities can be made inaccessible by the impact of certain hazards – landslides, floods.
- Settlements in hazardous locations, e.g. coasts, hillsides.
- Homes in need of repair or reconstruction.
- Low educational achievements – 50% primary education highest.
- High unemployment – 27% participants.

Fig. 1: Insurance of properties



### Community cohesion and structures

- People feel accepted in their community - 92%.
- In disasters people willing to assist – 80%.
- People are willing to help develop their community – 60%.
- Community groups exist but face many challenges.
- Political interference affects community cohesion.
- “They only give supplies to whoever support their party” Participant.



### Limited Capacity and Low Resilience

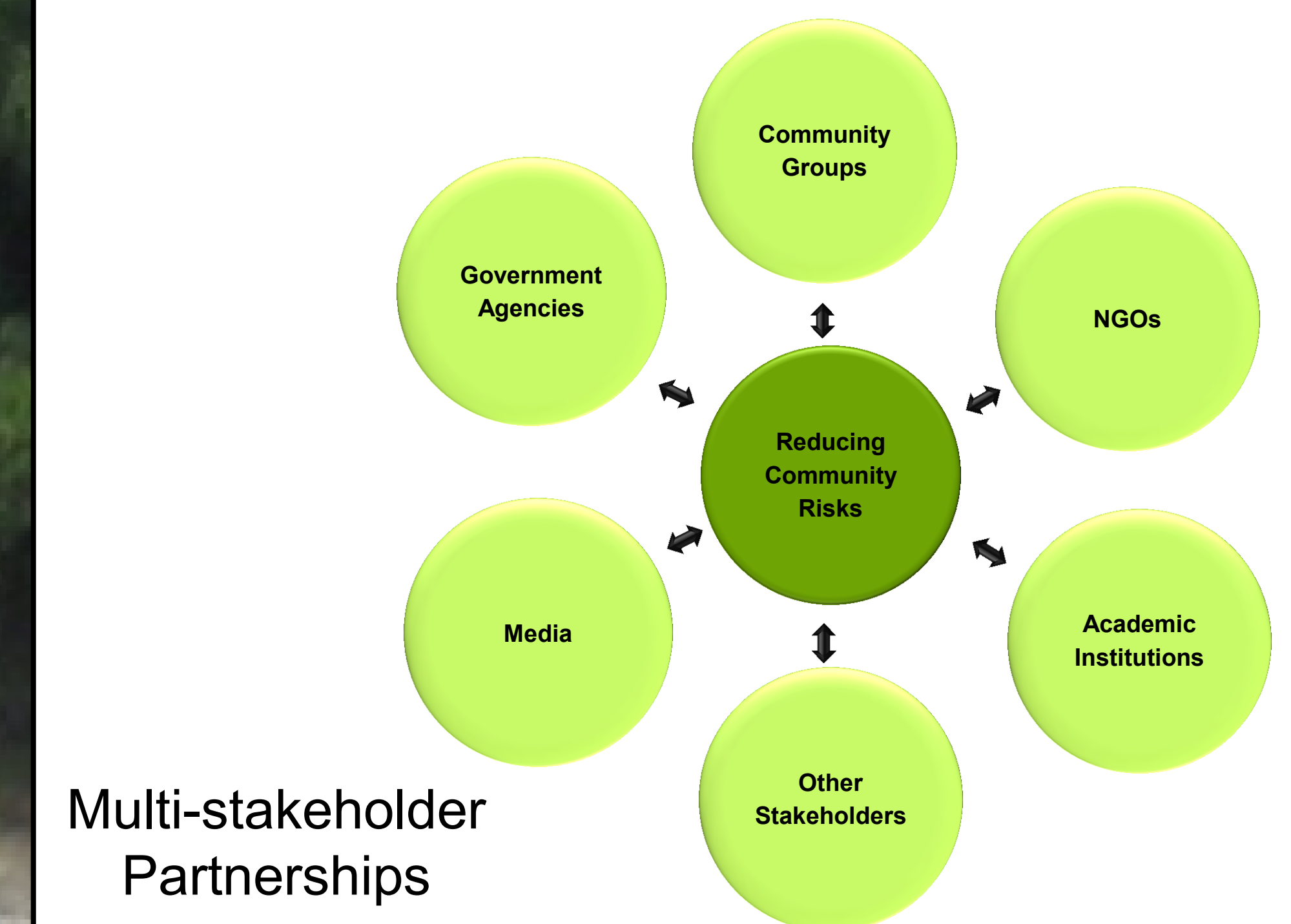
- Insufficient knowledge and training in disaster related areas – 36% trained.
- However, 76% willing to attend training.
- Limitations in risk transfers and micro-credit
- **Over 80% have no insurance, Fig 1.**
- **Lack of finance - main reason for no insurance.**
- About 80%, no family emergency plans.
- Preparedness usually random activities for hurricanes.



## BUILDING CAPACITY, REDUCING RISKS

### Strengthening Communities Capacity

- Identifying and addressing vulnerability.
- Livelihood security.
- Continuous awareness and education .
- Risk transfer mechanism – affordable
- Disaster preparedness – ongoing.
- Promote prevention and mitigation.



## CONCLUSION

- The Caribbean is prone to multiple hazards which often cause disasters.
- Vulnerability is high, limited resilience and capacity.
- Communities and community groups are usually willing to do more.
- Community capacity can be enhanced to be more effective in building resilience and reducing disaster risks.

## REFERENCES

Collymore, J. (2011) Disaster management in the Caribbean: Perspectives on institutional capacity reform and development, Environmental Hazards, 10:1, 6-22.

UN/ISDR (2011) Economic disaster losses increasing, threatening all regions, rich and poor countries warn new United Nations Report. Press Release, Geneva: UN/ISDR.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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